

Resuming Star Rated License Reassessments: Questions and Answers Informational Webinars on June 27, 2023

The questions and answers contained in this document are from the Resuming Star Rated License Reassessments informational webinars hosted by the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) on June 27, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Please note not all questions from the webinars are listed in this document. Questions that were the same or similar were combined to eliminate duplication. Information related to the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) modernization project and how this project intersects will be shared in the coming months. Lastly, many questions were received related to access to the webinar recording and presentation slides. A recording of the webinar will be posted along with the presentation slides and resources at <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Provider/Licensing/Star-Rated-License/Resuming-Star-Rated-License>.

Education Questions:

Q: Is the Equivalency Exam equal to EDU 119/other similar certifications and do you have to take the exam if you completed this course?

A: If you already have taken EDU 119 you do not need to take this exam. This exam does not take place of and is not equivalent to EDU 119. The Division of Child Development and Early Education does not offer college courses or issue college credits.

Q: If a staff member passes this quiz would they need EDU 119 for any reason in the state of NC to work in child care?

A: It depends on the pathway they want to take. There are many scenarios. For example, if they want to move forward and receive a college degree or take college courses in ECE, they will need to take EDU 119 to receive college credit. If they want to stay in their current role and not pursue any further education in ECE, taking the exam is the right choice.

Q: If I have an employee that is from South Carolina (SC) and they have the equivalent of EDU 119 will that be transferrable? In SC it is called ECD 101.

A: The person needs to contact DCDEE Workforce Education Unit; dcdee.works@dhhs.nc.gov to see if the class is transferrable.

Q: Will the equivalency exam/certificate be the same as a 2-year associate degree in terms of ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale)?

A: No. Successful completion of the exam is only an equivalency to the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential (NCECC). It does not earn a person any semester hour credit. In terms of ECERS, the level of education is not considered. Education is only evaluated for points in the education component of the rated license.

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Q: Who is required to take the exam?

A: It is not a requirement to take this exam.

Q: I have an Associate in Early Childhood, will I need to continue education or equivalencies?

A: Please contact: DCDEE Workforce Education Unit; dcdee.works@dhhs.nc.gov

Q: Are there any training materials for the exam?

A: There is not a study guide, prep materials or resources for this exam. However, here is some information to help guide you on what the exam is about;

To be successful, applicants should be able to implement across developmental domains:

- Developmentally Appropriate Environments and Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- Guidance techniques
- Schedules
- Teaching strategies

(The above should support culturally, linguistically, and ability-diverse children and their families in inclusive settings).

Additionally, applicants should:

- Have a basic understanding and knowledge base of Early Childhood Education (ECE)
- Be able to develop and implement a career/professional development plan.
- Know what the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) stands for and how it pertains to ECE.
- Have a basic understanding of NC Licensing policies, procedures, and regulations.
- Understand Health and Safety for ECE

Q: How does the exam affect a center that is considering an initial assessment to obtain a rated license?

A: That depends on the education of the other staff. A passing score on the exam will provide a person with the equivalency to the NCECC. The NCECC or it's equivalency is a minimum requirement for lead teachers and teachers in NC and currently to earn two points in the education component of the rated license 50% of the lead teachers have to have the NCECC or it's equivalency.

Q: How will passing the Equivalency Exam impact the educational program component for Environmental Rating?

A: The equivalency exam has no impact on the program component. There is not an educational component within the Environment Rating Scale.

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Q: Please clarify that this certificate is not sufficient to be a Lead Teacher in an NC Pre-K Classroom.

A: The NC Pre-Kindergarten program has separate teacher requirements. The NC Pre-K requirements can be found in section .3000 of the childcare rules.

Q: Why is this test not available for our Teacher Assistants that have been with us for years and now are being asked to return to school?

A: Teacher Assistants can take the exam.

Q: If a teacher passes the test what point level would they be if they are a lead teacher? E What point level would they be as an assistant teacher?

A: This exam will earn a person the NCECC equivalency which is a minimum requirement for teachers and lead teachers in NC. When determining points for the education component of the rated license, in addition to the equivalency, it would depend on the person's experience and/or if they have additional semester hours in EC/CD. For questions regarding a person's point level, please contact the child care consultant who works with your facility.

Programmatic Questions:

Q: Does everyone have to apply for the reassessment?

A: At this time, everyone operating with a two through five star rated license is in a hold harmless status until June 30, 2024. This means no action is required regarding a rated license reassessment. The cohort plan shared during the webinar and corresponding timeline provides a preparation year to assist programs in preparing for their reassessment year. Facilities in Cohort One (due for reassessment in 2021, 2020, or before) will have a preparation year beginning July 1, 2023. No facility will be reassessed until July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.

Q: Can you keep your stars and not do the assessment?

A: A rated license reassessment includes an evaluation of points within two components: program and education. Stars are earned based on the total number of points earned in each component and an optional quality point. The Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment is a part of the program component. If you choose not to have the ERS assessment, stars will be determined based on points earned without it.

Q: What happens if you choose not to do the reassessment and you have a star license as a FCCH? You also know that you're probably going to close within the next three years.

A: The two through five star rated license is a voluntary system. Programs that choose not to apply for a rated license operate with a one star license. At the time of reassessment, you could ask your consultant to process a one star license for you.

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Q: Is the rating scale going to be a requirement?

A: No. The two through five star rated license is a voluntary system. A rated license reassessment includes an evaluation of points within two components: program and education. Stars are earned based on the total number of points earned in each component and an optional quality point. The Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment is a part of the program component. If you choose not to have the ERS assessment, stars will be determined based on points earned without it.

Q: How do centers/programs factor into the cohorts that were either new – so had to be accessed to get a license – or volunteered for an assessment under the Division’s Temporary Voluntary Assessment opportunity during the hold harmless period? Are they now current from their recent assessment until three years out from that date? Or do they have to be reassessed under one of these three cohorts?

A: In an attempt to be customer friendly and simplify the process, all programs currently operating with a two through five star rated license were placed in the cohort plan. This plan includes facilities that are past due for their rated license and facilities that are not yet due for their reassessment. If they were new in the last three years and/or chose to be reassessed during the temporary voluntary assessment opportunity, their rated license is valid for three years. The cohort they are a part of is dependent on the effective date of their license and when it is due for reassessment. As a reminder, we are in a hold harmless status until June 30, 2024 and therefore no facility has to do anything before July 1, 2024. Additionally, facilities are not required to do anything during their preparation year, only the reassessment year. The preparation year is simply an opportunity for DCDEE and partnering agencies to assist programs in preparing for their reassessment.

Q: How do we know what cohort we are a part of?

A: You can review the effective date of your license. If it is a rated license, it is valid for three years from the effective date. This changes only if you reapplied for additional stars during the three year period and all components (education and program) were not assessed. Your consultant will reach out to you and let you know what cohort you are in.

Q: I had a rated license assessment on 4/18/2023. I still have not received the official score or findings as of today, but will my cohort be determined by the date on my existing license or by 4/18/2023?

A: In the initial planning you may have been included in the numbers for the cohort that aligns with the due date of your current license. However, once you receive your new license, it is valid for three years so you would move to cohort three. Please follow up with your licensing consultant. They can verify the status of your current application and confirm what cohort you are in.

Q: Are the cohort dates based on when your license expired or when it was issued?

A: Licenses do not expire, but if they are a two through five star rated license they must be reassessed every three years. Therefore, the cohort you are in is dependent on when your reassessment is due, which is three years from the effective date on the license.

Q: When should TA providers receive the list of facilities in cohort 1?

A: A list of cohort 1 participants are posted at <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Provider/Licensing/Star-Rated-License/Resuming-Star-Rated-License>.

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Q: It might be helpful if the licensing consultants sent their sites an email stating which cohort each site is in.

A: They plan to communicate with each of their facilities within the next week.

Q: How does relocation impact the reassessment parameters?

A: When a child care center or family child care home operating under hold harmless undergoes a change of location or a change of ownership, the consultant will use previous points achieved from the facilities last star rated license assessment to assign a star rating at the end of the temporary license. The new owner/facility location will be expected to go through a star rated license reassessment during the cohort year established under the previous facility license

Q: Cohort 1 prepares this year and then will be assessed July 1st 2024 to June 2025. Will we know an approximate date for our center?

A: Yes, your consultant will provide you with specific information regarding your reassessment visit information.

Q: In 2019 we had our assessment and went from a 5 star to a 4 star falling short 1 point on education. I am in Cohort 2, will I have to wait until 2024-2025 to have our education points only reassessed?

A: The cohorts outline the plan for the reassessment due dates. Contact your consultant and they will assist you with any questions about increasing stars outside of the cohort year.

Q: How soon can you apply to have the assessments if you feel your program is ready and does not need a preparation year?

A: During your preparation year, if you are interested in moving forward with the reassessment, that is your choice. You do not have to wait until the reassessment year.

Q: If programs are due for their 3-year rated license before their currently assigned cohort is due, can they move forward with their rated license reassessment?

A: All facilities are captured in the cohort model. Refer to the effective date of your license and the reassessment due date is three years from that date. If you are unsure, please reach out to your licensing consultant.

Q: Do you have to wait until your cohort to go through ERS assessment and rated license application?

A: The cohorts are based on reassessment due dates and offer preparation and reassessment years. If a program has questions about increasing their stars outside of their reassessment year, they need to contact their consultant to discuss next steps.